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FOCUS DOWNTOWN

News, Issues & Events from City of San Antonio Downtown Operations
February 2010

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Mark Your Calendar

February 6
Primer Sabado
Market Square
www.marketsquaresa.com

February 12 - 14
River Walk Mardi Gras Activities
www.thesanantonioriverwalk.com

February 13
Amor en el Corazon
Main Plaza
www.mainplaza.org

February 16
Sons of the Confederate Veterans
Historical Re-enactment
Alamo Plaza
For info call 289-0318

February 17
Elimination of City's Commercial Bag Program
Central Business District
For info call 207-8477

Out & About Downtown

by Paula X. Stallcup, Director, Downtown Operations



The New Year has already brought big changes for the Downtown Operations Department! We are excited to be in our new office on the ground floor of the St. Mary's Garage. The move to this location allows us to provide more centralized services for our customers, while creating another use for our City-owned garage.

Speaking of serving downtown customers, we recently surveyed our parking patrons. You can read all about the results below. Others are already taking notice of our efforts - we are proud to announce that our Centro Info center was recognized as the Best Public Restroom by the San Antonio Express News Downtown Blog.

What has not changed is our commitment to providing you with family fun all around downtown. In February we debut a new monthly event, Primer Sabado in Market Square, happening every 1st Saturday of the month.

There is always something happening downtown, and every month we are making sure you know about it. As always, we look forward to seeing you out and about downtown!

We're located at 400 N. St. Mary's, #100. Contact us at (210) 207-3677 or via email at downtown@sanantonio.gov for questions or assistance related to downtown San Antonio.

Houston Street Two Step

by Tonya Drake, Special Projects Manager



Partnering with the San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo and the Downtown Alliance, visitors did the "Houston Street Two-Step" on Saturday, January 30, 2010. What a great time!

Step 1 was the Texas Longhorn Cattle Drive, featuring longhorns parading down Houston Street. Step 2 was the Houston Street Stroll with an exciting passport adventure with special offers from the restaurants, shops, and businesses on Houston Street. The experience included musical entertainment locations, authentic chuckwagon with cowboys cooking over a campfire, and activities for all ages in the Jefferson Street parking lot.

Thanks to all our great sponsors including the Downtown Alliance, San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo, Federal Realty, and Bromley Communications. Thanks also to the many Houston Street businesses that participated in the event.



Market Square Celebrates First Saturday

by Sonia Gaeta, Management Analyst



Join us as we celebrate PRIMER SABADO every month in Market Square featuring local entertainment, arts & crafts, children activities, food and much more! Primer Sabado is a one-day event held in downtown Market Square located at W. Commerce and Santa Rosa

February 20

Annual Tower Climb
Tower of the Americas
For info call 829-7267

Asian Festival
Institute of Texan Cultures
HemisFair Park
www.texancultures.com

February 27

Living History Re-enactment
Alamo Plaza
www.sanantoniolivinghistory.org

March 13

Luminaria
www.luminarlasa.org

St. Patrick's Day Parade
www.harpandshamrock.org

**Downtown Operations
Has Moved!**

by Sonia Gaeta,
Sr. Management Analyst



The City of San Antonio Downtown Operations Department Director's Office, Contract Services, Special Events and Administrative and Fiscal Services divisions have moved to St. Mary's Garage, 400 N. St. Mary's, Suite #100 (corner of St. Mary's and Travis).

The new location features over 8,300 square feet of office space, maximization of natural light, ample meeting space, convenient parking for visitors, and most importantly, a centralized location for Downtown Operations services.

Our phone number has not changed; you can still reach us at 207-3677 or visit us on the web at www.sanantonio.gov/dtops

The River Operations office will remain at the Marina located at 202 E. Nueva. We look forward to serving you at our new location!

**Talkin' Trash -
Changes Approved!**

by Veronica Garcia,
Executive Assistant



In an effort to improve the sanitation condition of downtown sidewalks, the City of San Antonio has passed an ordinance amending Section 14-17 (Solid Waste) of the Municipal Code for the Central Business District. These changes include limited trash placement and collection times, mandatory receptacle identification, a

Street, next to the Museo Alameda. The event is free and open to the public from 12 noon to 6 pm.

Don't forget to visit the Museo Alameda and shops in Market Square while you are here! The shops in Market Square are open seven days a week from 10 am - 6 pm.

For Primer Sabado participation or vendor information, please contact Margaret Rodriguez, at (210) 710-8909 or visit our website at www.marketsquaresa.com

Hope to see you in Market Square on Primer Sabado, February 6!

Centro Info - Best Public Restroom

by Veronica Garcia, Executive Assistant



Where can you find the best breakfast taco in downtown San Antonio? Or the best place to relax? How about the best public restroom? The Downtown Blog, published by the San Antonio Express News, recently released its list of the Downtown Best of 2009.

Centro Info, owned by the City of San Antonio and operated by the Downtown Operations Department, was recognized as the Best Public Restroom. The facility, located on Commerce and South Presa, features 12 individual public restrooms, plus a combination family/disabled room.

Offering a spacious lobby and warm atmosphere, Centro Info is not the typical public restroom facility! To maintain a safe environment, the City provides daily security. With sleek, stainless steel industrial finishes, the "facilities" are kept on a rigorous daily cleaning schedule, and feature automatic toilets, faucets and dispensers to keep "waste" to a minimum.

Stop by to also get information about downtown thanks to the Ambassador staff from Centro San Antonio, our downtown public improvement district. Centro Info is open until 2 am every day, 7 days a week. Amenities include a large video screen showcasing local venues and events, plus an information booth with brochures and maps.

Check out the other Downtown Best of 2009 winners at: <http://blogs.mysanantonio.com/weblogs/downtown/2010/01/best-of-2009.html>

New River Walk ADA Map

by Robert Potter, Department of Public Works, Disability Access Office



In an effort to encourage citizens and tourist to explore some of San Antonio's unique downtown features, the Disability Access Office has expanded the River Walk Map. The map shows River Walk access points - elevators, ramps, and paths - as well as attractions, hotels and landmarks so that visitors can plan walking routes along the River and on the streets. The Downtown map is available at: <http://www.sanantonio.gov/ada/RiverwalkMap.asp>

In the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which promotes inclusion and Universal Design, the City of San Antonio is continually striving to make improvements to the downtown pedestrian sidewalk system so that all visitors and citizens can go out, explore, and have fun.

As part of the Downtown Traffic Infrastructure Improvements Projects 2007-2012 Bond Program, extensive infrastructure improvements are planned and will include wheelchair ramps, streets, and sidewalk upgrades. Phase 1 construction will begin in 2010 starting with 22 major intersection improvements.

We will update the River Walk Map as construction projects and downtown pedestrian upgrades are implemented and completed. For more information, contact 207-7243.

Downtown STAR - Lupana Perez

by Veronica Garcia, Executive Assistant



The Downtown STAR award recognizes Downtown Operations Department employees that go above and beyond the call of duty, demonstrating exceptional Service, Teamwork, Attitude and Resourcefulness. We received over 50 nominations for the Downtown STAR awards. Each Downtown STAR receives an award, recognition in the department newsletter, lunch with the Director, and a special prize. A copy of the nomination also goes in their personnel file.

This month we highlight another Downtown STAR:

**Lupana Perez, Senior Accounting Clerk -
Fiscal & Administrative Services**

Lupana offers our customers first-class service, and she is always willing to help other staff with accounting questions, issues or reports. She has a positive attitude and eagerly listens to new ideas. Lupana knows the importance of professional development and is the first to volunteer for special projects. Her watchful eye and constant oversight of our department funds ensure each dollar is spent wisely.

Thank you Lupana for all you do!

If you know a Downtown Operations Department employee who demonstrates exceptional customer service and has left a positive impression on you, nominate him/her for the Downtown STAR award at <http://www.sanantonio.gov/dtops/DowntownStars.asp>. For more information, you may also contact

transition to plastic dumpsters near residential units and the elimination of the City's commercial bag program.

The amendments were developed in coordination with downtown businesses, residents, trash haulers and other stakeholders over the past several months. The amendments went into effect on December 19, 2009, with two exceptions:
 1) The commercial bag program will be eliminated after February 17, 2010;
 2) All eligible dumpsters in the Target Zone must be converted to plastic dumpsters by February 17, 2010.

We thank all the stakeholders who supported these amendments in an effort to create a cleaner, safer downtown community.

For a complete list of the amendments or more information on how they may affect your business, please contact Veronica Garcia at (210) 207-8477 or veronica.garcia@sanantonio.gov.

River Walk Improvements Update

by Cindy Martinez,
Special Projects Manager



The last area of the River Walk Capital Improvement Project (RWCIIP), between the St. Mary's Street Bridge and the Omni La Mansion Hotel, is currently under construction. Once completed, the entire outer River Loop will be ADA accessible from S. Alamo in the King William area to Josephine Street and the Museum Reach extension.

The project scope includes new ADA ramps, sidewalk and flagstone repairs as well as landscaping improvements. The project is scheduled for completion by the end of February.

We look forward to continuing to work closely with the businesses along the River Walk to ensure communication and coordination. For additional information, please contact Cindy Martinez at 207-3372.

Opportunity Knocks

The San Antonio Airport will host an outreach event and certification workshop for vendors interested in bidding on Specialty Retail Concessions. Learn about opportunities to be part of the Airport business atmosphere, plus network with other businesses at these events!

Outreach Event
 Thursday, February 11
 6:30 - 8:30 pm
 Central Library Auditorium
 (600 Soledad)

Certification Workshop

Veronica at 207-8477.

River Walk Draining

by April Hernandez, Department of Public Works



Every year, the Department of Public Works collaborates with the City's Downtown Operations Department, San Antonio River Authority and San Antonio Water Systems (SAWS) to drain the River Walk. This year, the Department of Public Works undertook an extensive effort to improve the water quality and clarity.

The draining of the River Walk began on the evening of January 3 and was ready for Public Works crews to remove sediment by January 4. Crews used heavy specialized equipment to remove 3,157 tons of sediment from the South Loop segment and Extension of the River Walk. This initiative is the first year of a two year project, which will complete phase one of the San Antonio River Walk Quality/Clarity Program. In 2011, crews will continue to remove sediment from the South Loop segment and begin removing sediment from the North Loop segment.

As part of the draining, City crews from Downtown Operations removed debris from the River Walk and cleaned water feature intake vents. Repairs to the floodgates and river walls were also completed.

Some of the items typically found in the River Walk each year include numerous cell phones, cameras, sunglasses, parade chairs, traffic cones, and silverware. The dates for the River Walk draining are projected fourteen years in advance to allow for events and conventions to be planned around the draining schedule. For future draining dates, visit: <http://www.sanantonio.gov/dtops/riverdrain.asp>

We encourage you to visit the River Walk soon to see the result of our combined efforts - a cleaner River Walk for visitors and you!

Countdown to the U.S. Census 2010

by Sonia Canales, Communications & Public Affairs Dept.



In three months, the United States Census Bureau will mail more than 600,000 Census forms to households across San Antonio and Bexar County. To ensure valuable community services and a better quality of life for our community in the upcoming 10 years, the City of San Antonio and Bexar County want to ensure that everyone living in our area is counted.

Your participation in the 2010 Census will ensure that a portion of the \$400 billion in federal funding will go directly to local community programs, healthcare, schools, and infrastructure. In addition, an accurate count of the population assures political representation at all levels of government. Collected census information is not shared with anyone, including the Internal Revenue Service, Immigration and Custom Enforcement, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Central Intelligence Agency, or any other governmental agency. There are no exceptions.

Expect the Census questionnaire to arrive in your mail box in the week of March 15, 2010. With only 10 questions, it's the shortest questionnaire in history and only takes about 10 minutes to complete. Fill it out! It's in your hands San Antonio! For more information, visit www.sanantonio.gov/census.

Serving You Better...

by Kenneth Appedole, Parking Operations & Enforcement Manager



The City of San Antonio Parking Division is committed to delivering exceptional customer service through superior performance. Feedback is an important aspect in helping us achieve these results.

We recently conducted an online customer service survey at each of our parking facilities. We are pleased to report that:

- 91% of respondents agreed that our staff was courteous and professional.
- 91% agreed that our facilities were clean and orderly.
- 86% were satisfied with their customer service experience.

As part of the survey, participants were entered into a quarterly prize drawing. Congratulations to Kathy Arteaga, the winner of 4 tickets for a Rio San Antonio Cruises barge ride down the beautiful River Walk!

The survey is always available online so we may receive your feedback. After your next parking experience in one of our facilities, please complete the online survey at: <http://www.customintercept.com/surveys/web/saparking.htm>

Thank you and we look forward to improving the customer experience to serve you better!

Friday, February 12
10 am - 12 pm
Central Library Story Room

RSVP to either event to Marisol Amador at 207-3406 or marisol.amador@sanantonio.gov

Did You Know?

Bike racks are available in three City-owned parking garages, including:

- St. Mary's Garage
- Central Library Garage
- Marina Garage

These bike racks are free for public use.

Q: Why do the ducks, herons and pigeons like the River Walk so much?

A: Well, if we were to say "the ambience," you probably wouldn't believe us.

The birds in the River Walk area are there because people feed them. Unfortunately, too many birds mean too much bird poop in the river. The River Walk Watershed Alliance (RWVA) asks you to please not feed the birds while you're enjoying the River Walk.



For more information, or to contact an RWVA member, please go to www.rwva.us.



RWVA
NEVER WALK WATERSHED ALLIANCE

PREPARED IN COOPERATION WITH THE TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND THE U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
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City of San Antonio - Downtown Operations

The mission of the Downtown Operations Department is to provide centralized services for activities related to maintaining the core of San Antonio in an exemplary condition and support downtown facilities, programs and events that highlight the city's unique qualities as a business center and tourist destination.

Need assistance? Have a suggestion for the newsletter? Contact us with comments or questions at downtown@sanantonio.gov.

400 N. St. Mary's, #100 San Antonio, Texas 78205
Hours: Monday-Friday 7:45 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

www.sanantonio.gov/dtops
Phone: 210-207-3677

Director: Paula X. Stallcup

Assistant Directors: Colleen Swain & Kelly Rafferty

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